

What is claimed is:

[Claim 1] 1. A connecting member for securing a trim assembly to a support of an automobile, comprising:

a connector body having a first end adapted to couple to the trim assembly and a second end adapted to couple to the support, said connector body having a first hardness; and
a sealing gasket integrally molded with said connector body, said sealing gasket having a second hardness less than the first hardness and adapted to form a seal between the connecting member and the support when the trim assembly is coupled thereto.

[Claim 2] 2. The connecting member of claim 1, wherein said connector body is formed from polypropylene.

[Claim 3] 3. The connecting member of claim 2, wherein said sealing gasket is formed from a thermoplastic elastomer.

[Claim 4] 4. The connecting member of claim 1, wherein said sealing gasket is formed from a thermoplastic elastomer.

[Claim 5] 5. An automotive interior trim assembly for coupling to a support in an automobile, comprising:

a substrate member generally providing structural support for the trim assembly, said substrate member having a front surface adapted to face the interior of the automobile and a back surface adapted to face opposite the front surface; and

a connecting member coupled to the back surface of said substrate member, said connecting member comprising:

a connector body having a first end coupled to said substrate member and a second end adapted to couple to the support, said connector body having a first hardness; and

a sealing gasket integrally molded with said connector body, said sealing gasket having a second hardness less than the first hardness and adapted to form a seal between the connecting member and the support when the trim assembly is coupled thereto.

[Claim 6] 6. The trim assembly of claim 5, wherein said connector body is integrally molded with said substrate member.

[Claim 7] 7. The trim assembly of claim 5, wherein said connector body is formed from polypropylene.

[Claim 8] 8. The trim assembly of claim 7, wherein said sealing gasket is formed from a thermoplastic elastomer.

[Claim 9] 9. The trim assembly of claim 5, wherein said sealing gasket is formed from a thermoplastic elastomer.

[Claim 10] 10. A method of making an automotive interior trim assembly for coupling to a support of an automobile, the method comprising:

molding a connector body by injecting a first curable material in a first shot of a molding operation; and

molding a sealing gasket onto the connector body by injecting a second curable material during a second shot of the molding operation.

[Claim 11] 11. The method of claim 10 further comprising:

coupling the connector body to a substrate of the trim assembly.

[Claim 12] 12. The method of claim 10, wherein molding a connecting body further comprises:

molding a substrate having an integrally formed connector body by injecting the first curable material in the first shot of the molding process.

[Claim 13] 13. The method of claim 10, wherein injecting first and second curable materials comprises:

injecting a first curable material having a hardness; and

injecting a second curable material having a hardness that is relatively lower than the hardness of the first curable material.

[Claim 14] 14. The method of claim 10, wherein the first curable material is polypropylene.

[Claim 15] 15. The method of claim 14, wherein the second curable material is a thermoplastic elastomer.

[Claim 16] 16. The method of claim 10, wherein the second curable material is a thermoplastic elastomer.